

# DRAMATIC MIRROR

AND

## LITERARY COMPANION.

DEVOTED TO THE STAGE AND THE FINE ARTS.

EDITED BY JAMES REES.]

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### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF

#### MR. PETER RICHINGS.

"Since the first night of 'acting life' was o'er,  
It has been his, to wake the frequent roar,  
To chain the heart, to draw forth passion's tear,  
In 'grave or gay, in lively or severe!'  
The wit, the scholar, and the actor blend.  
In him to make the favorite and the friend."

The reputation obtained suddenly, in the disclosure by genius of all its glory when it first appears, is no doubt the most flattering to the pride. But "these violent delights have violent ends." The world often seems disposed to be vexed with itself for having been surprised into admiration, however well deserved; and to vent its spite upon the very idol it has made, merely because it has been made an idol. Thus it happens that rapid celebrity is often a source of equally rapid detraction and annoyance. The reputation, on the contrary, of slow growth, has gained deep root before any rival can be alarmed. Admiration becomes settled into a habit, and the public is apt to regard as a reflection upon its own discernment, any deduction from esteem which has arisen gradually and not without ample opportunities for previous examination, whether improved or otherwise; we will not undertake to deny that in the one case the motive of the judges may not be as much mistaken by them, and as merely self-complimentary, as in the other; but of this one point there cannot be a doubt—the slowly acquired fame is generally the safer and, in the result, the more satisfactory of the two.

The history of the subject of our present memoir will, in some degree, illustrate our remark; but it will do more and better; it will show the advantages of patient perseverance and of enthusiasm without self-exaggeration.

Mr. Peter Richings was born at Kensington, a sort of suburb of London, where there is a famous Royal Garden and Palace. He made his first appearance in the world on the 19th of May, 1797. His father was a Post Captain in the British Navy. After his son's birth, he sailed round the world with Vancouver; "he fought in famous battles;" and, ultimately was made an Admiral.

The rank in which the father of Mr. Richings moved, naturally gave him access to the first sources of influence. Hence it chanced that the late Lord Melville, then a governor of Charter House School, in London, had the youth placed on the foundation of that celebrated institution. In 1814 he passed his examination before the regular authorities for that purpose, the chaplains of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and was successful in obtaining an exhibition from Pembroke College, Oxford. Here he remained for a year and a half. His father in the mean time had been honored with a lucrative station under the British government in the East Indies. An excellent situation being open in his department, he proposed his son for it—who had already passed his examination for the degree of Bachelor of Arts. Presently after the arrival of young Richings in the East Indies, his father was seized with paralysis and he was obliged to accompany him back to England. Having relinquished his studies and having been foiled by

the sickness of his father in his other object, a commission was purchased for him in the British Army. His health was now considerably impaired, and unfortunately he found himself drafted for the West Indies. As this was a destination seldom considered desirable even to the most robust, but in his feeble condition, positively dangerous, he sold out his commission and once more became a man of peace.

The next we hear of Mr. Richings, shows him in the latter part of 1817, a devotee, at once, to love and law;—in plainer language, he had articulated himself to an attorney and had taken unto himself a wife. He remained two years in the study of law, but the confinement only confirmed the threatenings of disease, which had induced him to shun the expedition to the West Indies.

Courted by the gay and fashionable, his amiableness and affability doubtless made them take a peculiar satisfaction in praising his accomplishments, especially his singing; and very likely he may often have heard it said, when certain ballads were given before those in whose company he would frequent operas and theatres. "Richings, why don't you go on the stage? I've heard you sing that song better,—aye,—a thousand fold." Be this as it may, an early predilection for the stage now ripened into a passion. But he knew the domestic opposition against which he would have to contend, were he to devote himself to such a pursuit. He was not disposed to chagrin his family and friends by adopting a course to which they were adverse, under circumstances which could in the least touch them personally. But one way seemed to remain. If he were to become an actor, he conceived there could be no fault found with him, should he, in doing so, withdraw from England. Our connexions, when they interfere with our arrangements, occasionally over-rate their motives for so doing, and look more to the operation of what we propose upon their own pride than upon our prospects. No adequate substitute appears to have been presented to Mr. Richings for the chances of distinction and emolument which he imagined in the stage; and though he probably fancied it due to friends whom he loved, not to disoblige them by crossing their path with his plans, he does not seem to have been convinced that any further concession was necessary than a mere removal, for the purpose of carrying on those plans to a sphere where the mention of them was not likely to grate upon those whose feelings he so tenderly respected.

With this view, he embarked for America and arrived at New York, on the 28th of August, 1821. The Park Theatre had just been re-built. It opened on the first of September. Mr. Simpson was induced to give him a trial. Mr. Richings was so well aware of his total ignorance of the art of acting, that he discreetly preferred beginning unostentatiously; and not aiming at a height which his good sense convinced him he must miss. He knew he had nothing to hope but from industry and a love for the pursuit he had undertaken; that he could only derive the requisite power to do himself justice from practice, and he had some misgivings about his qualifications for so humble a part as Henry Bertram, in Guy Mannering, which was selected for his debut. His success agreeably surprised him. Mr. Simpson immediately gave

him an engagement, under which he worked his way for two years, gradually overcoming his awkwardness, but never admitted to any attempt involving the least responsibility. At the expiration of this time, the extravaganza of Tom and Jerry was brought out and to Mr. Richings was assigned the part in it called Dick Trifle. Hence may be dated the commencement of his career. It was the first character with which he had been entrusted, affording any scope for his yet dormant capabilities; and he was so fortunate in it with the audience, that it obtained for him an immediate increase of salary from the manager.

From that date to the present;—in all, sixteen years, Peter Richings has chiefly resided in New York, and attached to the Park Theatre. His range of characters has been unbounded: and whether as the second tragedian;—as the genteel or eccentric comic actor;—the prince of fops;—the merry Irishman;—the frowning bravo of melo drama;—or the tenor and bass singer;—he has always merited favor and not unfrequently triumph. There is a distinctiveness; an individuality; and what artists call a *keeping*; in whatever he portrays, whether a minor or a prominent part, evincing intent observation of nature, and the faculty so much rarer than is generally conceived, of conveying precisely to his audience the image in his mind. In short, there are few performers we could withdraw from London, who in any of the various characters assigned to the subject of our sketch, could find a better substitute in the Royal Theatres of the great metropolis of the drama, than Mr. Richings. In this regard, our play-going world may be proud of him, for he is theatrically an American; here he first became an actor and he has never appeared as an actor, excepting here.

Mr. Richings was induced to quit New York, and become stage manager for Mr. W. E. Burton—and made his first appearance in this city as Captain Absolute, in Sheridan's comedy of Rivals—this was the opening night of the National, August 31st 1840, and the house was crowded. Mr. Richings while with Burton, from some cause or another, did not win his way to public favor, as speedily as his histrionic merits justly entitled him—nor was it until he took the stage management of the Chesnut street Theatre, that they were really appreciated.

The position he holds now as an actor is just such a one as he richly deserves—and so completely is he identified with the characters he represents that we not unfrequently lose sight of the man in the actor. His Dazzle, in London Assurance, and Captain Tarradiddle, in What will the World Say, are perfect gems—and it is a question with us, if there is another man in the country capable of imparting that peculiar interest to them, which the author left as it were entirely with the actor. Mr. Richings is still with us, and striving with the times to keep up the drooping fortune of the Chesnut. If good selections, pieces well played, are the passports to success, then indeed the Chesnut should be really so.

Mr. Richings is spoken of in private life as highly exemplary, being a well bred man, and a finished gentleman—we could expect no other character of him.

For the Dramatic Mirror.

### THE ADVENTURES OF SIMPEY.

*A short but important chapter. Law and justice.*

The parties stood before Alderman Milnor, Brief—Simpey—and Mrs. Collins who with tears in her eyes begged a postponement of the case until she could see Lawyer Kittera. The Alderman stated that if he deemed a Lawyer necessary for the boy she should have all the advantages of one—but the case must go on—” Brief stood boldly up—his malignant eye rested upon the trembling boy—and he stared at Mrs. Collins, as if he thought her presence there was as a witness against him—“I accuse this boy, your honor, of robbing me of a tin box containing valuable papers, money &c. I have traced him from Norristown here, and found him in this good woman’s house.”

“And in this boy you identify the thief?”

“I do.”

“What have you to say boy? Speak out; don’t be afraid.”

“I am not afraid, Sir. I am innocent.”

“Prove it, boy; prove it.”

“I took nothing from Mr. Brief belonging to him. I took nothing but what I had a claim to. Let him inform your honor what that paper was. Let him prove it to be his.”

“Stop, my boy. This won’t do. You acknowledge, in part, taking a paper.”

“I do, and will keep it unless Mr. Brief wishes me to produce it here—here, in your honor’s presence. If he says this, I will immediately produce it otherwise I will not.”

“Ah! there is some secret here. Mr. Brief, how is this? What does the boy mean?”

“Why—why—it is true—the paper—I mean—the—the—damnation, I am foiled again. All that I mean, your honor, is the tin box and paper.”

“Boy have you the tin box and paper?”

“Yes Sir.”

“Do they belong to this gentleman?”

“No Sir. They are mine until I see the rightful owner.”

“Mr. Brief, I must dismiss the case. The boy seems to maintain his right, and with much sincerity. You have proved nothing against him. He offers fair. Boy, will you bring the tin box and paper to me?”

“Yes sir.”

“Hold,” exclaimed Brief, “no—no—no—”

“Ah, Mr. Brief, there is guilt in that look. Shame, Sir. There is some roguery here. Boy, you can go.”

“Sir—if you please—Mr. Brief has hunted, pursued and threatened me, all the way from Norristown; do, let me stay here until he has gone.”

“Officer, see that this boy is conducted safe home. Clear the office.”

*Local matters—Mysterious Note—An Ambush—Villany laid open—A dreadful situation for our youthful hero—His courage—Fire an excellent servant, and useful for more things than cooking and destroying property and lives. Shows how in this instance it was the means of saving life, without a spark.*

Our readers may not have forgotten Jane, the daughter of widow Collins; a mutual, and what may be called childish attachment, had taken place between her and Simpey. They read together, and they walked together—their young

hearts expanded with the joyous opening of the portals of fancy—the imagination ever alive to the incipient stage of love, clothes it in a thousand charms, as rich in variety, as in romance, in this, what the poet has justly called “Loves Young Dream,” did time glide sweetly away. Joseph, the brother of Jane, looked upon Simpey as one of the family, and was often the companion of their moonlight rambles. The domestic circle of Mrs. Collins was of one the richest the land might envy.

It was Saturday night,—(and a Saturday night at the time we speak, was a kind of halloven, particularly among poor people, and Mrs. Collins was poor,) the family were disturbed by the entrance of a porter, with a note for Simpey—it was plain and laconic.

“Dear Boy—An old friend, just returned from Europe, wishes to see you immediately. The bearer of this will convey you to my residence. I accidentally heard of your place of abode, and have lost no time in sending for you. B—.”

*Philadelphia, 18—.*

“Bless my soul, it is Mr. Brown.”

“Ees, that be the name,” said the porter, “I heard a man call him Brown—ees, that be him.”

“Oh, how glad I am—where’s my hat?”

“Why, Simpey, you won’t go, will you?” anxiously enquired Jane.

“Certainly, sister, certainly—I will be back by ten o’clock.”

“Go, by all means, my son, every thing depends on your seeing him.”

Simpey was soon ready, and followed the supposed porter.

The streets, as usual, were crowded. “What are so many people doing in the streets of a night?” is a question frequently asked, but not so easily answered. We could give something of a history of these night-walkers, their motives and their objects—but as it would be an unnecessary digression from the subject upon which we are at present writing—we will leave our readers to await patiently for the information which we feel satisfied our explanation would convey, until some more fitting occasion.

In a room partially lighted by a small lamp sat a man of very unprepossessing appearance—guilt was rendered visible by a glare of light as it rested somewhat reluctantly upon his face—he was sipping brandy. We conceive there is no situation in life more disgusting than that of a man sitting alone sipping brandy. It is villanous.

“Well, I suppose I must obey orders—Brief saved my life once, that is, he made twelve men believe that I was the most amiable, accomplished, and ill used gentleman in the world—and am I not a gentleman? Was I not educated in the parish school? and am I not a graduate of the house of refuge? Have I not been through, and taken my degree in the penitentiary calendar? Pooh! who dares to say I am not a gentleman and a scholar? Now my business here is to enact a Mr. Brown—Brown that is a very common name, and he, no doubt, is a very common man. Mr. Brown, here is your good health.”

At that moment a closet door opened, and Mr. Brief popped his head out.

“Mr. Jenks, for heaven’s sake don’t drink so much.”

“Mr. Brief, permit me to observe—carelessly to observe, that my name is not Jenks, but Brown—observe, sir, Brown.”

“Well, well, only don’t drink too much.”

“Hush!—I hear a footstep—it is Ben’s—and by h—the boy is with him—hush!”

The door opened, and Ben entered, dragging Simpey along, who had scarcely reached the second step of the stairs, before suspicion of foul play entered his mind—he was now in the room, and it was too late.

“Ben, leave the room—don’t you know me, Simpey, eh?”

“No, sir.”

“Not know me,—me, your old friend, Brown?”

“Brown!” shouted Simpey, “is it possible?” and he ran joyfully toward him.

At that moment a glare of light rested upon a malicious grin which was passing over Jenk’s face, and Simpey gave a look of actual horror and started back in affright.

“No, no, no—you are not Mr. Brown.”

“Look here, youngster, there is no use whimpering here—we are alone, and you must account to me for a certain paper and a certain tin box.”

“I have no tin box, no paper, but what I have a claim to.”

“Ah! say you so, youngster? Do you pretend to have a better right to it than me?”

“Yes.”

“Ah! ha! then please to inform me what the nature of that paper was, eh?”

At that moment, Brief was seized with a violent fit of coughing.

“There is some one in the closet, sir.”

“No, boy, it is only a cat—it has *c-laws*, I will be sworn—ha, ha, ha!”

“Won’t you leave me go, sir,—I am but a poor boy, and—”

“Give me up the tin box and paper, and you may go to h—, if you choose. Mark me, boy, otherwise you never leave this room alive, there are those somewhat interested in this matter, who will consider your death a blessing; so look to it, youngster.”

“My death is of little consequence to any body—I am ready to die; but I never will give up that paper to any but the rightful owner.”

“Well, that is spunk, any way—so ho there, Brief, come out—deal with the chap as you like, I have performed my part of talking.”

“Well, Simpey.” So spoke Brief as he came from the closet. “You do not seem surprised to see me here?”

“No sir, for I heard you cough in that closet.”

“Umph! You are now, Simpey, in my power—you know the value of that paper, and how necessary it is for me to have it—choose now between life and death—here is a man whose business it is to kill—give me up the paper or die, and with you the secret of my crime.”

“Mr. Brief, there you are mistaken—two or more persons are acquainted with it.”

“Ah, you have told the story—and pray my little tattler, do they know where it is?”

“No, I have buried it—thank heaven, it is safe.”

“D— —n, villain, scoundrel, I’ll flay you alive; do you think I—I, Brief, a man who has stopped at nothing to advance his inte-



rest and accumulate money, is to be checked in his career to fortune by such a vile worm as thou art? Jenks, have you the sack ready? cut his throat and throw him into it immediately—Ben will carry it to the river. I have no fear of discovery—this house is mine, and these men my tools."

This was hissed as it were into Simpey's ear.

"Well, Mr. Brief, it is my business—blood once shed hardens the heart, you know: so here goes—but speak; youngster, won't you give up the paper?"

"Never."

"D—n the fellow, he has given me reason to kill him."

At that moment there was a cry of fire and a loud knocking at the door.

"Fire—fire—fire—raise the ladder—up with the ladder—the back part of the house is in a blaze."

These were the sounds which reached the ears of the murderers. Smash, went the glass in the lower room—smash, went the sash in the upper room, the one Simpey was in, and the end of a ladder was seen, at the top of which, was Joseph Collins.

"Away," he cried, "the lower part of the house is in flames."

"The h—it is" cried Jenks, and away he scampered.

Brief was stupefied.

"Up, up, Simpey—this way, this way."

"But the fire, where is the fire, Joe?"

"Ha! ha! ha! in our mouths—shouts fire! fire!"

It was a trick of Collins, and his companions—he had followed Simpey to the house—suspected foul play—gathered together some of his playmates—shouted out fire—got a fire ladder—the rest the reader knows. The engines arrived, but did not play upon the house.

"You have saved my life, Joe."

"Well, that is right, and my sister's too, if I am not much mistaken. I tell you what it is, Simpey, I will have to watch over you for her sake."

From our Correspondent.

NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 1st, 1842.

ST. CHARLES THEATRE.—London Assurance was produced at this theatre on Monday November 20th, with considerable success. The scenery was very effective and the acting admirable. Sir Harcourt and Lady Gay were the principal features of the piece, and their performance from first to last kept the audience in constant good humor, and won for them immense applause—I doubt much if those characters were ever better acted in any theatre. This comedy was played several nights to the best filled houses of the season, and would no doubt have continued so for a month longer, (for the attraction increased each night,) had it not been interrupted by the engagement of Mr. Hackett.

The opera season commences next week with the Seguin and Mr. Manvers—La Norma is to be the first produced. In order to gratify, or rather as I should think to satiate the appetites of a portion of the community, the manager has at great trouble and expence, converted the beautiful temple of the muses, into an amphitheatre, for equestrian performances,\* and engaged the

\*It is curious to observe how suddenly all appearances of an amphitheatre are destroyed in this house, for example—we have had a *Grand Entree*, as the equestrian bills announced it, of twenty horses—riding by Stickney, North, Lipman, &c.—slack rope, and ground and lofty tumbling, in an area of forty-two feet diameter—whilst the ladies are warming

best talent in the country at any price, to give effect to that species of entertainment—but in spite of all the effort made, it has proved a perfect failure, and this no doubt will be the only season that all such humbuggery will be produced at this establishment. The public of New Orleans seem determined that the St. Charles shall be the throne of the legitimate drama, as it was originally intended by the proprietor.

AMERICAN THEATRE.—The stock company of this establishment for comedy, opera, and melo-drama, is not inferior to any in the country. We have Knowles' comedy of "Old Maids," and the melo-drama of the "Brigand," performed on one night in a capital style, and the next, Rossini's opera of the "Barber of Seville" with all the original music, and without the assistance of stars—and to conclude the amusements of the evening, Master Hernandez the wonderful equestrian prodigy, and wonderful he is, with a host of others, go through their exhibition in the arena.

The dramatic company consists principally of the following talent:—Mr. Ludlow, in genteel comedy; Mr. De Bar, the leading actor in comedy and melo-drama—this gentleman has made himself a great favorite with the public, his acting is highly esteemed and justly so. Mr. Farren, the hearty old man; Mr. Thorne, the lion of this establishment in low comedy, Irishman, and buffo singer in the opera; Mr. Maynard, a very talented actor in light comedy, and the juvenile characters; Mr. Sankey, in the feeble old man very respectable; Mr. Saunders, a promising young actor in second low comedy. Mrs. Farren, the leading actress and great favorite, though she gave up the breeches to Miss Petrie in the "Old Maids"—this young lady is an established favorite in this theatre, and would be so in any other; Mrs. Russell, one of the leading actresses, formerly of the "old Camp," engaged here for the leading old woman. This line of business is badly supplied in theatres generally, and forms one of the principal features in this establishment. I had forgotten old Sol, but he generally brings up the rear, though sometimes he acts as *avant courier*.

FRENCH THEATRE.—This theatre is probably the only one in the states, which has, and is doing a regular good business, hence it is they are able to support a very expensive company. The orchestra is composed of choice talent and many—it is delightful to hear the brilliant execution of their overtures. The enchanting Calvé, prima donna, is still *l'adorée* of this theatre, her voice is much impaired from severe illness, during the prevailing epidemic last summer. Meyerbeer's grand opera of "The Huguenots" is the principal card at present, it has lately been revived, and draws crowded houses each night of its representation.

NEW ORLEANS, Jan. 1, 1842.

MR. EDITOR—

Presuming information respecting theatricals in New Orleans, at this time, would not be uninteresting to your numerous readers, I herewith send you a concise account of the "doings" in the crescent city.

At the St. Charles, Hackett has just concluded a very profitable engagement—his benefit last night, was a bumper, and the audience was composed of the elite of our city; a tribute of beauty and fashion, to exalted genius. Hackett has played two engagements here in five weeks, and one in Mobile. He is now on the point of departure for the North. Levi

their toes in the saloon, and the gentlemen taking their brandy and water or coffee.—Hey presto! the ring disappears from the stage, and a fine comedy followed in less than fifteen minutes, after which a grand equestrian melo drama in which thirty or forty horses have to gallop over mountains, up waterfalls, down cataracts, and bled and died to the satisfaction of its limited and very select auditors. Notwithstanding all this extraordinary humbuggery exhibition, they have not yet drawn a good house, which proves that New Orleans cannot support two equestrian corps, or as I have said before, the public are determined that the temple shall be devoted to the legitimate only.

North has just concluded an engagement at this house—his benefit was well attended; but the horses at either house have ceased to draw, and both managers have sent their equestrian troupes to other regions.

The Seguin and Manvers having arrived, are now actively engaged in the rehearsal of the opera's which the managers assures us, shall be brought out in a style unsurpassed. Mrs. Richardson is here from Mobile. She made her debut in *Cordelia*, to Hackett's *Lea*. The good people of Mobile have lost a treasure in Mrs. R.; but their loss is our gain. She will not readily be spared from here. "London Assurance," having had a temporary repose during Hackett's engagement, is promised next Monday and Tuesday—and on Wednesday commences the "reign of song" Muehler, having left the other house, is musical director.

At the American, the Ravels have just concluded their engagement, which has been very successful—they sail to-morrow for Havanna. At this house they are preparing *Schinder Eller*, to be brought on the tapis, simultaneous with *Cinderella* at the other house. Mat Field in his burlesque has provided a rich treat, all the music of the original opera is given, and the piece was played just often enough in St. Louis, to make the actors *au fait* in their parts, and have it *comme il faut* at the Orleans.

Perhaps a list of the company may not be amiss—here is a full inventory, in which will be recognised the names of some of the old favourites of the Southern stage: Sol Smith—glorious old Sol—his partner, Ludlow, Farren, Leicester, a new candidate for southern favor; De Bar, Gernon, a very promising actor, and capital singer; Jimmy Thorn, whom every body knows; Maynard, whom every body don't know; Saunders, a young Bostonian, quite a favourite; Sutherland, one of J. Wal-lack's *protégés*, whose career bears honourable testimony to the able tutorage of his professional father; Sankey, who in the old men of every description from grave to gay, is as ambitious and studious an actor as the southern stage can boast; Johnson, Wright, and Lovette, who, though last, not least; for in the Ballet, new honors come upon them thick and fast.

In the ladies department, Mrs. Farren, Miss Petrie, Mrs. Russell, Mrs. Warren, Mrs. Gernon, and Miss Johnson, stand ready to lend their assistance, in tragedy, comedy, opera, or farce, and all are excellent.

From our Correspondent.

BALTIMORE.

A goose once saved the city of Rome, and the breath of a similar bird, although unmusical to actors' ears might be of service in saving the reputation of the Front street theatre. Really Mr. Wemyss it is insufferable to be compelled to hear such music as that of Macbeth so shamefully mangled, we had intended on our return from the theatre to have penned some remarks upon the performance of Macbeth by Mr. Butler, but our mind is so untuned by the discordant sounds of the choristers, we acknowledge ourselves unequal to the task, but we will answer for it, Mr. Butler will not forget this night's performance, we pitied him, and are ourselves to be pitied—if the manager cannot procure a few better singers let him omit music altogether, and not condemn those who have ears attuned to sweet sounds to suffer three hours martyrdom in one night.

The Avenger on Wednesday was better calculated for the talent of the company, and was well sustained. As a play we have but a poor opinion of its merits—the denouement is too horrible, the Avenger instead of being an object of interest to the audience, becomes their aversion, we trust for the honor of human nature, so remorseless and blood thirsty a being never had existence but in the author's brain; Mr. Butler sustained the part with great ability, but the same fault we noticed last week was more disagreeably apparent. Mathews as the mercenary Sweede was decidedly the hero of the piece.

Wemyss as Bernard was very careless, and what is unusual with him was also very imperfect, setting a very bad example. Harrison as Wallenstein made the most of a very disagreeable part. Mrs. Philips as the gentle Agnes gave us a true picture of a devoted female heart, sacrificing all, even life itself, to love. The play was repeated on Thursday, but was not attractive. On Friday Hamlet, and on Saturday Mr. Butler took his benefit, playing the Stranger, in which he forcibly reminded us of Conway, he also gave us the fourth act of Shylock; he wants energy to portray the fearful storm of hateful passion, embodied in the Jew of Shakspeare—it was a weak effort and decidedly the worst part we have seen him attempt. Mrs. Philips as Portia, Mathews as Antonio; and Wemyss as Gratiano, appeared to be more acceptable to the audience than the star of the evening, who left the stage almost unnoticed. Notwithstanding all this Mr. Butler is an actor of sound sense, and good judgement, we hope to have an opportunity of seeing him again before he finally leaves the country. The farces throughout the week have been very well acted—a Mr. Reeve, a stranger to the audience, is reaping golden opinions by his delineation of Irish characters.

There is a report that Miss Clifton and Mr. Burton have taken the Holiday street Theatre, and intend to open it shortly, if so, we shall have higher game to fly at, and shall keep you apprised of their movements.

Rookwood and the Bonny Black Bess, drew quite a crowded house, it is in dramas of this description the company of the Front street Theatre are seen to the best advantage, and we anticipate a run of good houses during Laforest's stay.

The Dramatic Mirror, having now attained a large circulation, through all parts of the country, is the best medium now issued, of advertising all matters connected with the Stage.

First insertion, 4 cents a line.  
Each subsequent do. 2 cents. do



## DRAMATIC MIRROR, AND LITERARY COMPANION.

Saturday Morning, January 22, 1843.

### TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"*Thespis*" is informed that we are perfectly well acquainted with the *ruse* of "getting up applause," as he terms it, and shall in the course of our publication expose those of the profession whom we observe practising the contemptible trick.

"*Jemmy Charcoal*," is respectfully declined. Biography of Mrs. Richardson in our next.

### WANTED.

Twenty-five more names, to add to the list of those who have requested us to reprint Number One of the present volume of the Mirror, that number being long since exhausted. Persons wishing a complete set will please forward their names immediately.

The Lancaster theatre is in full blast under the management of Mr. Ward. It opened last week to a house of over \$160

### CLOSING OF OUR THEATRES.

It is in vain to disguise it—there is a wonderful lack of theatrical taste in the community—beauty and fashion have put their faces against the drama, and the boxes of our theatres now present a most beggarly account. We question if Ellen Tree, or Macready, would draw the aristocracy. What therefore is to be done?—are our managers compelled in this most enlightened age—the age of literature, and in the city of its very birth, to close the temples dedicated to its service?—The idea is horrible—it is alarming. And yet there seems to be no remedy—men must live, and if the theatre does not afford them the means whereby to exist—they needs must seek something else. If, because one or two individuals have by their gross immoral acts, disgraced themselves, and thereby brought the theatres into disrepute, is it reasonable, or is it just, that the more respectable are to suffer for the dirty acts, committed by these keepers of *seraglios*? Is it proper that the drama should suffer in the estimation of the public because some few of the artists engaged are men of desperate characters as well as fortunes?—Certainly not. We might as well condemn all the ministers in the United States because Mr. Van Zandt, and Mr. Maffitt are fond of pretty girls?

There is a redeeming quality in the theatrical public yet, and as soon as these immoral establishments are broken up, and foreign adventurers "ousted out," things will go well, and the drama in its purity once more

"Reign supreme."

Actors themselves must oppose the system by which they have been oppressed and half starved out, did they but know how and in what way the money was spent which should be theirs, would they night after night toil and labor for these *Blue Beard* managers? No! If they do know they are fools, and if they do not know—why we may probably enlighten them next week.

### MR. E. S. CONNER.

This gentleman has re-appeared at the Walnut Street theatre, like a meteor attracting crowded houses, and eliciting rounds of applause. With the cause of his quitting the National we have nothing to do—suffice, however, to say, while there, Mr. Conner was scarcely heard of—it seemed as if he had fallen from his popularity, and become lost, as it were, to his friends and the public—we were mourning over the loss of such an ornament to the stage, and were about making the necessary inquiry in relation to his withdrawal, as it were, from all those bright scenes of his former glory, and trace, if possible, the cause of his sudden (and as it really seemed to us) downfall, when the event stated above saved us the trouble. Conner has recovered himself, shaken off the incubus which has weighed him down to a limited point in the dramatic scale, and burst upon us in all the pride and triumph of other days. Like a freed man, who having just shaken off the shackle of slavery, he bounded upon the boards of the Walnut Street theatre, with a look, not unlike that of Tell, when escaping from Gesler, he gazed once more upon the wild scenes of his home, and

exclaimed in all the agony of joy, "I am once more free upon my native hills."

The astounding reception Mr. Conner received, speaks trumpet tongue to the deep damnation of the wrong done him somewhere. What that wrong is, we know not, nor do we care—the fact of there being one, and the extraordinary success which has attended his re-appearance at the Walnut, is at present enough for us. Still we would not do a wrong to any man, and our columns are as open to the one party as it is to the other. If the blame lies with the one, let us not unjustly accuse the other.

This gentleman takes a benefit at the Walnut Street theatre this evening, and as his selections are of a very high order, which, with the addition to his own popularity, the house, as it always is, and ever must be—crowded.

### OUR ACTORS.—No. 11.

**W. B. Wood.**—This gentleman belongs to the old school, the rules of which were established upon the pure principles of the legitimate. His tutors were the representatives of Shakspeare, and his models the classic actors of Europe. Mr. Wood has toiled hard up the hill of his profession and has long since attained a height—age itself has not lowered—nor the hand of time undermined. A stranger would probably find fault with Mr. Wood's acting *now*, but had he seen him as we have in the days of his prime—and the brightness of his fame, the pen would drop from the hand, and the remembrance of the past, blot out the ungenerous thought for ever.

**W. Jones.**—This old actor, and early pioneer of the drama in the west, whose name we have introduced often in our theatrical sketches, belongs to the legitimate school also. He is excellent in old men, and always *au fait* in the matters of the drama. A degree of carelessness is discernable at times in his acting which can easily be traced to its proper source, "he sees what he sees, and knows what he knows," The drama is not what it was, and the spirit, the fire which kept him up in its glory, fails and glimmers in its days of shame, and he is where the lusture of the pure legitimate drama is pal'd indeed! As hearty old men—good blustering jolly dogs, Mr. Jones is at home, and if he had the rotundity of old Warren, he would not in his style of acting be unlike him.

**C. S. Porter.**—The state house clock, is not more regular in its daily evolutions, than is this gentleman to the duties of his profession—he is always on the spot, rain or shine, sick or well—we have known him to get up from a sick bed—go to theatre—play his part, and return again to his bed and his medicine. There is no affectation in this—no disposition to be eccentric—it is his way of doing business, and nothing but total pro-tration—*gout* or rheumatism keeps him from his post. Mr. Porter is not enthusiastically attached to his profession, but long habit has so identified all his feelings with it, and the avocations of the past linked them together so strongly, that we question if he would be contented out of it. Mr. Porter's style of acting is easy and natural—at times however, as if actuated by a sudden impulse he is carried away, as it were, from his usual course—hence, there is an unequality in his



personation of character, which not unfrequently destroys the effect which otherwise would be produced. In these short sketches it is not our intention to criticise the actor, or his acting—they are simply outlines of men whom we respect and esteem, occasionally, however, we may throw a darker shade over them; merely, to heighten the effect and render them more perfect. The life of Mr. Porter would be a history of our several theatres—it would be rendered interesting by his early connection with the old Apollo, in South Street and the several minor theatres which have passed away like vision, leaving not a trace behind, but the recollection that such things were. Some of these days we shall sit down to the task, and furnish our readers with a biography of their old favourite.

**Mr. Faulkner.**—This gentleman's style and manners of acting are very peculiar—he always reminds us of Paganini, the celebrated violinist, of whom it is said, that he threw into his bow, a portion of that nervousness which agitated his fame, and we have seen our old friend Faulkner, great in parts, rendered so, we think, by the peculiar excitement of the nervous system—and this is what we call *feeling a part*, going it strong in reality. Mr. F's face and figure are much in his favour when playing the caustic old men—he can look all, without speaking—he would make an excellent Lord Burleigh.

Faulkner is a good actor, and, like the three already named, of an excellent private character.

#### PHILADELPHIA.

**CHESNUT ST. THEATRE.**—The new comedy of the *White Milliner*, from the pen of Douglas Jerrold, author of the *Rent Day*, &c. was produced for the benefit of Mr. Lewis T. Pratt, on last Monday evening. The house was tolerably filled, and imparted a rather warmer aspect to the hitherto chilly atmosphere of this our favourite theatre. Prefixed to the *caste*, we find the annexed remarks, touching the origin of the *White Milliner*.

"To the North of Durham Place, (Strand,) London, fronting the Street, stood the New Exchange, or England's Bourse, built, says Pennant, under the auspices of James I., in 1608, out of the rubbish of the old stables of Durham House. It was built on the model of the Royal Exchange, with shops in the interior, filled with Milliners, Seamstresses, and the like. Walpole relates that a female, supposed to be the widow of the Duke of Tyrconnell, supported herself till she was known, and otherwise provided for, by the little trade of this place, and had delicacy enough to wish not to be detected. She sat in a white mask and a white dress and was known by the name of the *White Widow*. It is this incident that suggested the composition of the above comedy.

The piece however, we deem *trite*—the dialogue in several of the scenes heavy—and in no manner is it likely to keep possession of the stage for any length of time. It would scarcely have been tolerated, had it not been for the admirable manner in which it was represented by the excellent company at this house.

Mr. Richings as Lord Ortolan, enacted the part with as much effect as it was susceptible of—in fact, too much praise cannot be awarded to this gentleman for the propriety of costume, in the various characters he personates, and

fidelity also to the author—one more generally correct in a part, it would be difficult to name.

Our old friend, Faulkner, as Justice Twilight was perfectly at home—a faithful picture of an imbecile and amorous old gentleman. "Quite correct" too, in his part.

Placide's Saul Sneezum, partook of the old complaint, "gagging,"—and his enaction vulgar in the extreme. We several times desired to have his breeches pockets "sewed up," and his hands tied behind him, it would not have impaired his digestion, which he seemed so desirous of promoting.

Old Doddler, by Hathwell, and Lararus Muff, by Eberle, were sustained in a happy manner.

Mr. Charles enacted a character who had but little to say, and of slight interest to the audience.

Mrs. Sefton, as Abbina, the White Milliner, was very clever, abating some affectation, which we hardly know whether to ascribe to nature or assumption—if the latter, "pray reform it altogether."

Lady Ortolan, was very well sustained by Miss Hildreth, whose enaction of subdued parts we deem almost faultless—we admired her much in that thrilling drama, "Barnaby Rudge." To such a line of characters, her genius is particularly adapted, and it is with this view, we digress from the comedy under consideration.

Mrs. Thayer as Miss Mellowpeare, looked and acted the part with her usual cleverness.

We did not remain after the comedy to witness the farce of "My Sister Kate," and the petite comedy of the "Boarding School," which was to conclude the evening's entertainment.

**WALNUT ST. THEATRE.**—Mr. Conner has been the chief attraction at this house, and were we inclined to be critical, a few of the characters in which he appeared might be reviewed with some degree of severity. We have heretofore spoken of the gentleman's carelessness in the reading of Shakspeare, and we have now to find fault with his dressing and looking the "Stranger," it was really too bad to see the care-worn, depressed, haggard featured man, looking as fresh and blooming as a bean. It is our intention to review the Walnut Street company, and sketch each member separately. Censure will be as lavish as praise, for we have too long neglected the really deserving of this establishment, and left unlashd those whose faults have cried aloud for correction. "Spare the rod and spoil the child," is not an inapplicable maxim to those more advanced. So look to it, one and all.

**CIRCUS.**—One is certain to be put in a good humour upon visiting the Circus. An air of joyousness seems to pervade the place which in the language of a very plaintive ballad—

"Is ne'er met with elsewhere."

The full and fashionable audiences, which nightly assemble, bear ample testimony to the bill of entertainment. Fun, fashion and frolic, are the duties presiding over the amphitheatre at present. Admirable is its police surveillance, and richly does the proprietor cater for the public. The company is excellent. The clowns Messrs Rockwell and Wells, almost convulse you with laughter, at their new and practicable

\* When will our Editor cease to use this quotation?  
—Printer's Devil.

jokes. The equestrians, Dale, Cadwallader, M'Collum, Glenroy, &c., &c., ride with the utmost skill, and exquisite grace. The pantomime corps, consisting of juvenile performers, acquit themselves with much credit to themselves and amusement to the audience.

Miss Wells is the very embodiment of juvenile grace, and dances divinely. She is destined to take an eminent rank as a danseuse.

#### ITEMS.

Died, on the morning of the 19th inst. Mr. Henry Eberle, well known as a member of the various theatrical companies in this city for many years.

**Mrs. Seymour.**—This accomplished lady gave her readings and recitations at the Musical Fund Hall, on Thursday evening the 20th. inst. It was a rich, and rare intellectual treat. We regret our inability to say more, as we write this at the compositor's case; in a few minutes our paper will go to press. We shall speak of her readings in our next.

Mrs. Mossop's child, by her former husband, Mr. Knight, is dead.

Mead, for years back costumer at the Park theatre, is dead.

**Miss Hildreth.**—This young lady takes a benefit at the Chestnut Street this evening.

**W. H. Smith.**—This gentleman's class for the manly and accomplished art of fencing, is nearly complete—it contains names of some of our most respectable fellow citizens. If we were not *au fait* in the science ourselves, we should have been pleased to have our names in such a goodly company.

**Harrisburg.**—Durang is doing well, so far, in this place. His company is very popular.

June, Titus, and Angevine, with their strong equestrian company will go to England in the spring, their arrangements now making are of the most extensive description—this will be requitting old England in a wholesale way for every single star we shall send a galaxy.

#### OUR ACTORS.—No. III.

**Charlotte Cushman.**—Nature and art combined never occupied a broader space upon the dramatic canvass in one person, than that which is grasped at by Charlotte Cushman, whose chief excellence is the infinite variety of her personations, and enthusiastic devotion to her art. Protean in her multifarious embodiments you see her in Nancy in *Oliver Twist*, and suddenly transformed into the Lady Gay Spanker, of the London Assurance. You behold her in the light and fairy form of Oberon, in the *Midsummer's Night Dream*, and *hey presto!*—in the flowing regal robes of Lady Macbeth. The surprising thing is, that in all she does, she never makes a failure. We verily believe, so versatile are her powers, that it would be almost a matter of indifference to her whether she enacted Juliet or the Nurse in Shakspeare's play, while we know she would start no objection to Romeo, and are quite assured she would play Mercutio to the life. In short Charlotte is a whole play in herself. It very rarely happens that in talent so widely diffused in their practical application, excellence is ever attained; a slender rise above mediocrity is generally the extent of its ability; but as there is no rule without an exception, so Charlotte Cushman is an exception to this rule, for while

she never fails, she sometimes soars even to excellence. The secret is, Charlotte Cushman is an actress—not a pretender to the art, but one possessing all the properties of the mind, quick in perception, well read and prompt, and ready in association. She does not merely go through the part assigned to her, but throws herself into it with all her force, and suffers it to carry her along losing all sight of herself. Charlotte Cushman's portraits are sometimes exaggerated, and sometimes sketchy, but they are always well conceived.

Edmund Simpson.—We see no reason why we should not include the manager of the Park among our actors, for although we seldom find him engaged in the business of the scene, we yet find him when occasion requires filling up the vacuum occasioned by an absentee, and exerting himself to the best of his ability in satisfying the claims of the public. Mr. Simpson is a veteran member of the old school, without one clap trap propensity of the new—there is nothing of labor in his performances, and nothing of effort to obtain the deafening shouts of the *groundlings*. His Michael Perez, in *Rule a Wife*, is a masterly delineation—and there are several other characters in genteel and eccentric comedy which he sustains with no less ability, still Simpson is not a comedian of the day—he deals in no grimace, he does not make himself up sufficiently for fun, he seems to sustain an air aversion to gaggery, and to entertain too sincere a relish for the wit of his author ever to substitute wit of his own. He is notwithstanding a good model for the rising genius of comedy, for although he lacks in spirit, energy, elasticity and youth, he never fails in correct reading and good sound discretion.

Mr. Barry.—We do not feel ourselves bound to the question of what a man has been, but what he is—our inquiries are to the qualifications of our actors, their present capacity, and not their past powers. We are told Mr. Barry has been an actor of some eminence, but we really cannot see any reason why if he has been he should not still be—unless indeed the genius of an actor becomes more rapidly impaired by wear, than the corporeal man by time. Mr. Barry does not appear to have lost any of his fair proportions by the withering hand that steals away the bloom of youth, and scatters the hoary frost upon our brow, we have in him no shrunken shank, nor has he the voice dwindled to the squeaking of a treble. No, all sound all ronchy. *The mens sana in corpore sano*—and we pronounce Mr. Barry has not fallen back or dropped one step lower down the ladder than he has ever done—we assert that Mr. Barry has attained all the eminence he can acquire, that we find no diminution of his powers, and that he is not yet in the sere and yellow of his leaf. We do not think the qualifications of this gentleman are positive recommendations to the dramatic muse, and we plead justly to the charge of liking his heavy business to his light comedy—we really look upon his *heavy tragedy* as comparatively light, while we have always found his *light comedy* exceedingly heavy. Our portrait of Mr. Barry is taken upon the stage, and not behind the scenes, where he distinguishes himself by the efficiency of his management.

Mr. Fredericks.—Art to be successful, must be in imitation of nature, and is so easy in its carriage and so forcible in its earnestness, that we forget the actor in the character he assumes.

This would appear to be the perfection of the art of Drama, it was so thought by the most distinguished of its professors, and for our own part, we incline to it with the most perfect faith. It is not so considered, however, by Mr. Fredericks, whose performances are in direct converse of this position, he never loses his identity, and may be truly said never to have practiced such an imposition upon his audience in his life. Well now we are disposed to disagree with the actor, and we have no doubt he will not agree with us. Be it so. Mr. Fredericks has satisfied us that a man may so disfigure and mar his own qualifications for the stage, that they become their own antidote. Mr. Fredericks' figure is good, his carriage is good, his face good, his voice good, his conception good, his reading good, and yet withal Mr. Fredericks is a bad actor. How is this? with so goodly a set of features, and so bad collectively. Let it be spoken, apathy, indifference, positive negligence, as if he were ashamed of himself and humiliated in the practice of his profession; all congregate in the form of an incubus upon his shoulders, weighing down his efforts and marring their effects. The difference between Fredericks and Charlotte Cushman, taking them in their opposite qualities, is—that she *throws herself into the part she assumes*, and Fredericks, ashamed at any effort at imposing upon his audience, *throws himself out*.

John Fisher, Mrs. Vernon, Miss S. Cushman, Miss Buloid, Mr. Abbot, Mr. Andrews, Mr. Clark, &c., &c., in our next.

PARK THEATRE.—On Tuesday evening, Mr. Simpson, the manager, took his benefit at this theatre, on which occasion the two new and attractive comedies, *London Assurance*, and *What Will the Word Say*, were performed to a good, if not a full house. The performances went off with their usual eclat.

The occasion of this benefit, we believe, resulted from circumstances recently developed in the matter of Fanny Elsler. We are not disposed to enter into that controversy, with which the public are perfectly indifferent about, but the appearance of the house under all the circumstances of the season, and the times was in satisfactory conclusion of the long established reputation of Mr. Simpson for veracity, and honour which could not be assailed with impunity, even by Fanny Elsler and her confidential adviser, Wyckoff.

Fanny Elsler's engagement was unproductive—there is no denying that—well, so much the better, say we—since it is the more likely to put an end to *Heels* and restore the *Head* to its former place upon the boards.

Fanny Elsler appeared one night upon the boards to receipts not amounting to her own demand upon the treasury for that night's performance; yet Fanny insisted upon being paid, and was paid, \$600. Leaving the poor actors who had assisted in the entertainments of the evening to fish for themselves. So much for Fanny's philanthropy.

Fanny is angry in having been advertised in the bills of Monday, January 3d, as appearing on the boards on that evening under the solicitation of the management, when to use her own words, *it was not so*. The true reading is that Fanny who understands the quackery of

the art, wanted to have it blazoned forth in pompous phraseology, that her appearance on that occasion was an act of pure benevolence—an outstretch of generosity, and all that sort of thing, when to use our own application of her words, *it was not so*. We forbear saying more, the public will draw its own conclusion on the facts, that Fanny has enriched herself and impoverished the management, while her charities, are upon the true Brandrethian or quack system, all puff, puff, puff.

On Monday next, the new tragedy of *Nina Sforza* will be produced.

Two or three old comedies are also in rehearsal which we shall duly notice.

The operatic troupe do not commence their engagement until the beginning of the month of March.

Fanny Kelly is expected by the next arrival.

BOWERY.—Hamblin and Mrs. Shaw, are the two stars of the Bowery, glimmering with a faint light, on a cold stage to thin houses. Shakspeare and spectacle is pompously announced on the same evening—but the public—the fickle public, read the bills and pass by with their hands in their pockets, not to be moved to the disbursement of their species. These are dull times, and Shakspeare and spectacle at the Bowery fail in their attraction. *Macbeth*, with Hamblin for the Royal Thane, drew us to a cold and comfortless seat in the boxes, which we gladly vacated at the fall of the curtain, leaving the Naiad Queen to luxuriate with her nymphs in the bath of beauty, without the fear of exposure to the audience for the most part left with us.

Hamblin's *Macbeth* is full of rant and fury, signifying nothing. Mrs. Hield's *Lady* is a fit companion for such a lord, and poor Hield's *Macduff* about upon a par with the former two. It was a melancholy affair.

CHATHAM.—*Josh Horseraddish*, or *The Lying Yankee*, written expressly for Yankee Hill, *The Magpie*, or *the Maid*, with *New Notions*, Major Wheeler by Hill, draws at this very favourite theatre, the members of the cheap system. Hill, successful as ever, lacks nothing in attraction. He is the go-ahead principle, and the public goes with him.

Thorne is preparing a magnificent spectacle which is to be produced, we believe, on Monday evening next. We hear nothing of the Naiad Queen who, we suppose will be left without a rival to live in her own waters in the Bowery.

OLYMPIC.—Mitchell has produced a most laughable affair, called the "*Queen's Own*, or *Women as they would be*;" it is of such importance in itself to claim the pen of criticism. It draws the shillings, that is all Mitchell cares for, and all it was ever intended for.

For the Dramatic Mirror.

#### ACROSTIC.

Success attend thy steps, fair maid,  
And may thy prospects never fade,  
Resplendent as thy beauties are,  
A mind thou hast, exceeds them far.  
Honored with thy friends' esteem,  
Around thy path may blessings teem.  
Ne'er may you feel a moment's pain,  
Nor meet with ought to make thee vain.  
Pure as the white and spotless snow,  
Of nought but virtue may you know.  
Radiant as bright beauties' page,  
The pride and pattern of the stage,  
Exalted to the highest fame,  
Regarded for thy spotless name. G.

Philadelphia, January, 13, 1842.



From our Correspondent.

CHARLESTON, Jan. 3d, 1842.

Mr. and Mrs. Seguin with Mr. Manvers, have been performing here to good houses. The operas presented during their engagement were *La Sonnambula*, *Cinderella*, *Fra Diavola*, *La Gazzaladra*, and the *Elixir of Love*. Mrs. Seguin in addition to her acknowledged capability as a musician, and her rich and facile soprano voice, possesses intellectual capacity of a high order. It is refreshing to hear a singer so free from the mawkish affectation of sensibility, which so prominently pervaded the style of a celebrated cantatrice, who with her husband reaped a golden harvest in this country, a short time since. Mr. Seguin has been gifted by nature with a voice of more than ordinary power and compass, which has been assiduously cultivated in the best schools. In the part of Dandini which he performed with a degree of humor and vivacity, which I have not seen equaled. He during the finale to the first act rolled down a cadenza of two octaves to the double E flat, the lower tones of which have a resemblance to the distant growling of an incipient earthquake. Mr. Manvers whom I had not previously heard, had not sang a dozen bars of the opening duet in *La Sonnambula*, before I was convinced of his just claim to be accounted the best English tenor upon the British or American stage. His voice is clear, rich, sonorous, free from impediment or affectation, and has evidently been subjected to the most rigorous discipline of initiatory practice and instruction. His execution of the aria "In her dark eye," in the "Elixir of Love" was as exquisite a specimen of tenderness of feeling, faultless execution, and purity of tone, as it has been my good fortune to hear.

The operas were very creditably produced. The choruses were much more correctly performed than I have generally heard them in this country—thanks to the efficient drilling of Latham, who in the parts of Baron Pompolino and the Podesta, fully confirmed the estimate which I had expressed of him in my last. In the opera of *Fra Diavola*, Mr. Dennison acquitted himself most creditably. Miss Manvers too, with her correctness and attention gave good augury of her future career. The *Elixir of Love* was played for the first time—Adina, Mrs. Seguin; Geanette, Miss Manvers; Nemoro, Manvers; Doctor Dulcamara, Seguin; Sergt. Beleore, Larkin.

The music is pretty, but, with the exception of the air I have mentioned, unimpressive. After the departure of the singers, a number of tragedies and comedies were performed by the stock company, but to diminished reality. On Christmas night a grand musical festival was given by the vocalists of the theatre.

Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro" is in rehearsal, with the following cast:—Count Almaviva (with the original music,) Larkin; Figaro, Latham; Basil, Massatt; Fiorella, Dennison; Susannah, Miss Melton; Countess, Miss Manvers; Cherabins, Miss C. Barnes; Benlivera, Miss Coad.

#### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF CHARLES BOOTH PARSON.

M. Noah criticised Parson's acting in a masterly manner, which could not have been otherwise than flattering to Mr. P. It was his first star engagement, and having passed the ordeal of a New York tribunal—it was a passport throughout the world.

He played at the Bowery, opened in *Othello*, and was called on to repeat it. He remained at the Bowery until the fall of '34. It was during this engagement that J. B. Philips' *Oranaska* was brought out, which has since retained a place upon the stage; he also played the *Demon Duke* in a drama of that name, written expressly for him—of its merits we know nothing.

After the New York engagements, he visited New Orleans, and opened at the Camp, then under the management of Richard Russell, Esq., and became joint manager with that gentleman in his western theatre.

Such is a brief outline of the dramatic his-

tory of Mr. Parsons. He has done much of the drama in the south, several pieces have been written for him, which he has made peculiarly his own, and the name of N. H. Bannister has received additional notoriety through this actor and liberal patron of the drama, our friend, C. B. Parsons, Esq.\*

It would now be invidious for us to speak of his merits. Our acquaintance with him commenced after the above was written, and all that we have to add here, to close a brief biography is the following from the *New Orleans Courier*, of March 25th 1838, which we wrote at the solicitations of the editor.

MR. PARSONS.—ORANASKA.—SEMINOLE.

"For thus the chief revives the battle's roar,  
And wake the sons whose sires he led before."—  
The Stage.

To us the Indian character has always been one of interest, and a thousand times have we regretted the stern necessity which compels our government to exercise its influence to crush their wild and untamed passions. Could they exist among their native wilds, far from the haunt of white men, alone, free, that interest added to our sympathies, would increase; but as we advance in population, our vast and extensive country opens to the view of the capitalist, and the farmer, her many rich and fertile fields. The grounds occupied by the Indians must become the scene of active industry, the home of civilized man. The howling of the wolf, the wild cry of the panther, and the war whoop of the savage, must yield to their potent power; and like the last dying echoes of an expiring monarchy—

"Be heard no more!"

There is something melancholy in the idea of those red sons of the forest being doomed to leave their homes, their hunting grounds, and the mounds raised over the bones of their fathers. And when we reflect upon it, and retrospection becomes busy with the thoughts of other days, those days when the red men were sole possessors of the soil, roving free as the winds of heaven among their native hills, acknowledging none as masters, nor bowing the servile knee to any but the Great Spirit, we can but drop a tear of sympathy over a fallen race. They were happy as a people, great as a nation. The pale faces came—woe! woe! be-tide them; at night full Logan returned, and found his home a heap of ashes; his wife, children, kindred, all that he held dear were locked in the cold embrace of death. The chief sat down disconsolate, and wept, for Logan was ever the white man's friend. And thus did they requite his fidelity. Humanity weeps over the story. The chief surveyed the melancholy prospect around him, and forlorn and broken-hearted he exclaimed in the agony of grief—

"There is none now who will mourn for Logan—  
No, not one!"

The sad lay of expiring tribes is now heard. The time is fast approaching when the fierce winds alone shall chaunt their requiem.

\* Such were our reflections, while seated at the Camp-street theatre, on the evening of the 20th inst, and gazing upon the mighty relics of a great nation, for there was a time when the Seminoles could boast of countless warriors. The play was *Oranaska*, or the *Mohawk Chief*, possessing as much merit as generally belongs to pieces whose characters are feebly drawn and intended to delineate those of the Indians.

The author however, Mr. J. B. Philips, of New York, a young man of some genius and more industry, has succeeded in drawing the outline of an Indian Chief which Mr. Parsons has filled up, and given all the rich coloring and chaste finish

\* Since writing the above, my much esteemed friend, Mr. G. W. Harby furnished Mr. P. with a drama entitled "Nick of the Woods," which has been played throughout the United States, for upwards of ninety nights; as yet, the author has received nothing for writing it, but the honour of doing so, if there be such a thing attached to dramatic compositions.

of an accomplished artist. It is not our intention to praise the one, or to criticise the other. The audience is now our theme.

In the first act, when Mr. Parsons appears as *Oranaska*, he was greeted by the Chiefs present, Cloud, No-a-cos a ola, Co e hadji, King Philip, Micanopy, Jumper, and others confederates of *Oceola*, and the sworn enemies of the whites, by a simultaneous war-whoop! It seemed as if they recognized one of a tribe with whom they would be proud to exchange the wampum of peace, and on the termination of the first act, so much had their feelings been excited by the "panorama of life," and the acting of Mr. Parsons as the *Mohawk*, that it was with difficulty they could be restrained from springing on the stage. Six times during the evening did their fearful yell ring through the house; and it was observed, at the time, that their eyes glared and the fierce blood of their tribe was up. A change came over their dream of captivity, and at every scene on the stage wherein the Indians had the mastery the muscles of their faces worked as with fearful passion, and the big veins swelled as if they would run into rivulets of blood. Here was no acting; and Mr. Parsons himself seemed to have caught their excitement; for we never saw an Indian so well represented, or the cunning of the scenic act so admirably carried out.

"Words may be counterfeit.  
False coin'd, and current only from the tongue,  
Without the mind; but passions's in the soul  
Always speak the heart."

In the fifth act, when the fortunes of war began to turn in favor of the whites, a fearful anxiety was depicted in their countenances; and when, at last, the brave *Oranaska*, the deadly foe of the pale faces fell, big tears were seen to course their way down the cheeks of the war-worn Seminoles. It was a sight worthy the pencil of a Raphael, to see these mighty chiefs weeping over an imaginary scene. Their eyes fixed, the fingers clutched, and every passion told the innate thought—

"We are not yet conquered!"

We might dwell long on this scene. To us it was one which will be remembered, when other and brighter ones shall have passed away.

After the play, Mr. Parsons met the warriors in the green room of the theatre. The delusion produced by the scenic representation had not yet passed away, for they appeared delighted to find that the Great *Mohawk*, chief was not dead, and partly believing that he had availed himself of Indian stratagem to save his life. So perfect was Mr. Parsons' delineation of the Indian character that *Micanopy*, the great chief of the nation, stepped forward and took the supposed *Oranaska* by the hand and surveyed with seeming pleasures his "fair proportions," commenting upon them much delighted—muttering—"mighty chief, great chief," and finally told him that he was a very proper man, he should never disgrace himself by wearing any thing else but the dress of a warrior—"come with us to our tribe, live with us, and we will make you a chief and confer upon you all the honors of our nation." Another gazed upon him, after he had assumed his citizen dress, and said—"so good a chief—and such a brave should go with them into the far West"—intimating that with such qualities for a warrior, 'twere a pity to hide them in a city!

The enthusiasm of these warriors, and their wild manner of criticising a performance is perhaps the highest compliment ever paid an actor. It was not alone, at the theatre, or in the green room these manifestations were made, but subsequently Mr. Parsons had visited their quarters and they renewed them with as much energy and earnestness. They may be politician in their desires and no doubt would wish so able an auxiliary, particularly as they bore witness to his great deeds of arms in the "mimic world."

(To be Continued.)

Dinneford & Logan are in Louisville.

Miss Alexina Fisher is a great favorite in Richmond.

Sol. Smith is at Natchez. What's in the wind?

## POPULAR SONGS.

## THE NOVELTIES OF 1842.

TUNE.—"A Landlady of France."

BY R. S. STEELE.

Old "go-ahead" father Time, who is ever on the climb,  
Has op'd another year to bring us wonders new,  
As there's time for everything, why I'll just take time to sing,  
The fashions, matters, and the tricks of '42.  
Though our *currency's* in rags, state improvement never lags,  
For the *rail-ways* and *canals* run our mountains through,  
With coals from *Pottsville's* mine, dug out at breakfast time,  
We can cook our dinners by in town, in 1842.  
We've new *sciences* and *arts*—while long heads explain their parts,  
Old mother nature's wonders they're resolved to out do,  
There's *magnetism* so queer, that while sitting in a chair,  
Folks can walk about asleep, in 1842.  
We have *galvanism* so strong, by which culprits are unhung,  
And made to grin as natural as life to our view,  
But *hangings* had its day, for imprisonment folks say,  
Its a punishment *more capital* for 1842.  
By school now, and by college, the march of human knowledge,  
Has made our folks so wise, that they want heads a-new,  
Their brains so overflow, that the people, high and low,  
Must empty them by lecturing in 1842.  
They lecture upon *storms*, upon *thunder*, *arts*, and *arms*,  
And old speeches like old clothes, are scoured up as new,  
Some lecture against rum, and then go tipsy home,  
And got a bed-room lecture there in 1842.  
We have *Paxian* guns, by which Columbia's sons,  
Can give home blows, and blow clear home the foe from our view,  
Then let *Victoria Guelph*, take no airs upon herself,  
Than the royal one's she's got in 1842.  
We have broken bank committees, who say it is a pity,  
That the *monster* and his brother *imps* our laws slip through,  
But 'tis many people's will, that in vaults of *Cherry Hill*,  
They should coin their notes of woe, in '42.  
We have bucks with *shining* canes, and with hair like horses manes,  
With plaids upon their necks and cloaks hung out to view,  
With their hairy chins and throats, and their *button'd bed quilt coats*,  
They look like two legged bears in 1842.  
We have *Pills* and *Panaceas* from each disease to free us,  
And nostrums to unfreeze us, or make lungs quite new,  
We've Brown's temperance *Root-beer*, which is much used I hear,  
To work the brandy headache's off in 1842.  
We have *Dingle's Buffalo Oil*, and the best thing in our soil,  
For making hair grow out as soft as silk to the view,  
If you would test its worth, call at Sixth Street and North,  
And you'll throw away your wigs in 1842.

There is the ladies cloaks and muff,—big shawls, tight sleeves, and puffs,  
In a *bustle* how they promenaded our fine streets through,  
To show their diamond rings, sirs, they freeze their pretty fingers,  
By only wearing half gloves in 1842.

## LEAF FROM THE OLDEN TIME.

MYSTERIES AND MORALITIES.

"Mouldering and moss grown, through the lapse of years,  
In motionless beauty stands the giant oak;  
While those, that saw its green and flourishing youth,  
Are gone and are forgotten."

During the ages that immediately succeeded the introduction of the drama, all Europe was shrouded in intellectual gloom—genius and taste were forgotten things. Literature and arts were no longer objects of human ambition, and the voice of the Muses seemed to be hushed forever. In the eighth century, however, representations of a gross and ludicrous description were common in France and Germany, which have sometimes been considered the earliest dawnings of the dramatic art.

But we are disposed to look to a later day. We consider it as springing legitimately from the *Mysteries* and *Moralities*\* which appeared in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.† The modern, like the ancient drama, in the opinion of several critics, was founded in the spirit of devotion. The songs of the Pilgrims returning from the Holy Sepulchre, are supposed to have given the first idea of that kind of dramatic poetry called *Mystery*. There are others equally distinguished for research, who maintain that with the enkindling light of civilization, and the dawn of political and intellectual liberty, the natural and irrepressible taste for dramatic representations began to arise. The clergy denounced and endeavoured to repress it; but finding it too strong and too general, they wisely turned it to account, and by diverting the cause of amusement from profane to sacred subjects, they contrived to extend their influence and interest among the people.

Thus arose the *Mystery*, which in all the southern countries of Europe and in England and Germany, preceded the rise of the national drama. The subjects of the *Mysteries* were the remarkable events in biblical and legendary history. The name is derived from the circumstances that generally, though not invariably, they represent the incarnation, the passion, the resurrection, and the other mysteries in the life of our Saviour. It is not our intention to follow up the history of the drama, our purpose is simply to furnish leaves from old books to amuse our readers.

The name of the first Miracle play, or pageant of the Wildkirk collection, was "The Creation of the World," "Rebellion of Lucifer," "Death of Abel." One portion of it represents a field. Cain enters with a plough and team; one of his mules being named "Donnyg." He quarrels with the boy because he will not drive him. After which Abel enters, and wishes that God may speed Cain and his boy. Cain replies unceremoniously, desiring Abel to go about his business. The murder afterwards takes place, and Cain hides himself.

## EXTRACT.

"Deus. Cayn, Cayn?  
Cayn. Who is that calls me?  
I am yonder, may thou not see?  
Deus. Cayn, where is thy brother Abel?  
Cayn. What asks thou me? I trow in hell,

\* Wharton, Percy, Hawkins, Malone, and others have concurred in calling them "*Mysteries*," a term at a very early date adopted in France. Dodsley, in the preface to the collection of old plays he published in 1744, seems to have been the first to use the word *Mystery*, to denote one of our most ancient dramatic representations. † The Latin word commonly employed for the purpose to the infancy of the stage, was *Ludus*.

† The play of St. George was performed at Windsor in 1416, before Henry V. It was also played in 1511. The miracle play of St. Catherine, was played prior to 1119. The one of the earliest of the miracles, was written by Geoffry, Abbot of St. Albans.

At hell I trow he be!  
Who so were there then mygt see!"

Cain having been cursed, calls the boy and beats him, but, as he says "to keep his hand in." He acknowledges that he has slain his brother, and the boy advises him to clear out, least, as he expresses it, "the bayles take us." This is followed by some gross buffoonery. Cain making a mock proclamation, in the king's name, and the boy repeating it blunderingly after him. Cain sends him away with the plough and horses, and ends the pageant with a speech to the spectators, bidding them farewell forever, before he "goes to the devil."

An incident is found in one of the *Miracle* plays, which is quite poetic. Mary (the mother of Christ) seeing a cherry tree, longs for some of the fruit, and Joseph tells her, that he who is the father of the child may procure it for her—the tree instantly bows down to her hand. The rest of the piece is filled with the birth of our Saviour.

In the play of *Histriomastix*, 1610, we read the following stage direction—Enter "a roaring devil with *Vice* on his back, *Iniquity* in one hand, and *Inventus* in the other."

In the second of the *Chester* series of plays, after the Deity has taken Eve out of the side of Adam, the latter observes:—

"I see well Lorde through thy grace,  
Bone of my bone, thou has her mase,  
And flesh of my flesh she has,  
And my shape though the saive,  
Wherefore she shall be called Iwysse,  
Virago, nothenge amisse,  
For out of man taken she is,  
And to man she shall drawe."

In Mr. Sharpe's work on the *Coventry* plays is an entry under the date of 1490, of "a *cheverel gyld for Ihs*," meaning "a gilt beard for Jesus."

The clergy sometimes assisted in dramatic representations, when it does not appear they acted. In the performance of the play of St. George, at Basingborne, in 1511, John Hobard "a brotherhood priest," received £2, 8d., for "bearing the book," or in other words, for acting as prompter.

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